

2806 W. 18th
Stillwater, OK
74074
February 20, 1994

Mr. Eric P. Newman
Eric P. Newman Numismatic
Education Society
6450 Cecil Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63105

Dear Mr. Newman:

In response to your inquiry concerning the enclosed scrip, I wish all the questions people asked me were so easy to answer. The merchant was William H. Rogers, a mixed-blood Cherokee who had a general store at North Fork Town. I don't know as much about him as some of the other merchants, but I do know that he helped supply food for the meeting in July 1861 at which about 1,000 Creeks--mostly McIntosh supporters--agreed to sign a new treaty with the Confederacy. During the next year, a number of important Confederate Creek leaders visited his store to make purchases, including supplies for the Creek Confederate regiments. North Fork Town, being on the Texas Road (U.S. Highway 69), was only about fifteen miles south of the battlefield at Honey Springs (the "Gettysburg of the West"--July 16-18, 1863), near present-day Checotah, Oklahoma. How Rogers's store fared after Federal troops invaded the Creek Nation down the Texas Road in August 1863, I can only speculate. Almost all Confederate Creeks and Cherokees fled to the Red River Valley as refugees in "the Stampede" that followed Honey Springs. Rogers probably left with them. Confederate troops re-occupied North Fork Town later but withdrew again to camps down in the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations late in the war. By the end of hostilities in 1865, very few buildings of any kind were left standing in the Indian Territory. I don't remember hearing Rogers's name mentioned in the post-war period of re-building, so I suspect he either died during the war or moved elsewhere.

Other pre-Civil War merchants at North Fork Town were S. S. Sanger, Grey Eagle Scales (white), Adkins, and the Eliasons. Post-war merchants included Sanger, Scales, James McDermott Coody (a Cherokee), W. B. and W. F. Crabtree, Judge George W. Stidham, and Samuel and George Washington Grayson--the last five all Creeks. Stidham also had a store at Creek Agency and one at Shieldsville (a mile north of present-day Okmulgee, Oklahoma) before the war. Shieldsville was named for merchant Charlie Shields. There were several merchants at Okmulgee and Muskogee, which were not established until after the war. I had never given much thought to their issuing scrip because most business was conducted on credit, by barter, or by warrants issued by the Creek government in anticipation of annuity payments. Currency

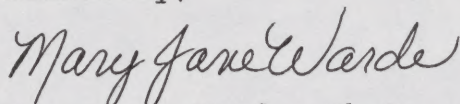
was in such short supply in the territory that merchant Frederick B. Severs (an adopted Creek) once had to ask for his merchandise back from a traveler because, after searching all night, he could not come up with change for a ten dollar gold piece. It does make sense that merchants would have issued scrip. My only question is, where did they have it printed? The only printing press in the Creek Nation was at Tullahassee Mission just west of present-day Muskogee. It was used for books, pamphlets, and educational materials.

I am interested in this topic because I wrote a biography of G. W. Grayson for my dissertation. Grayson (1843-1920) lived all his life within five miles of North Fork Town-Eufaula. He clerked for Sanger before the war and for Scales and Stidham after the war. He and Sam bought out Scales and started Grayson Brothers Mercantile about 1875. They helped found Eufaula when the Katy Railroad came through and stayed in business until they declared bankruptcy in 1898. The fourth chapter of the biography deals with merchandizing and related economic activities in the post-war period.

Much of my information comes from the Oklahoma Historical Society. Included in the archives in the Robert S. Boyd Collection, 82-059, is William H. Rogers's ledger for 1861-1863. Other sources are the "Indian-Pioneer History," the Indian Journal published at Eufaula after 1877, traders' licenses in the Creek National Records, the Creek Indian Memorial Association records, assorted manuscripts, and articles in The Chronicles of Oklahoma. The best person to contact at the OHS is William Welge, Director of the Archives and Manuscripts Division. Bill knows his material and is an excellent person to work with. The address for the OHS is the Wiley Post Historical Building, 2100 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73105. The phone number is (405) 521-2491.

I would love to see your collection when I am in St. Louis for the conference. I plan to stay with my sister in Florissant and will be in town for the long weekend. Perhaps we can exchange information at that time.

Sincerely,



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